

Executive Pathways



Step up to challenges

Being able to immediately apply what he learnt enables Mr Jason Espone to contribute effectively in the workplace



PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

BY SHERYL QUEK

MR JASON Espone, 35, had career progression in mind when he embarked on his Master of Business Administration (MBA) course 18 months ago.

But he probably was not expecting the payoff to be this swift.

In December last year — while pursuing his MBA — he was promoted at work. He is now global operations manager at Keysight Technology, a United States-headquartered electronics measurement company. Previously, he was an IT infrastructure operations lead.

The part-time student with the Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS) will graduate in May with an MBA degree conferred by University of Sunderland in Britain.

Becoming a leader

Mr Espone lauds the practice-oriented nature of the MBA programme. Says the Singapore permanent resident from India: “The knowledge gained can be transferred to the workplace the next day, after the lesson. In other words, we can add value to our organisation immediately.”

In his current role, Mr Espone manages a team of eight. The skills and knowledge gleaned from the programme, he says, have enabled him to transition effectively to a leadership position.

He says: “Over the past 18 months, I have improved my leadership skills and am better able to engage my colleagues. I am also able to assess issues critically to execute strategies aligned with organisational objectives. I can look at a business in totality rather than just within my area of responsibility.”

For instance, he can understand how corporate strategies are linked to human resources.

“This is important because as one progresses up the corporate ladder, one needs to look at the business on a macro level,” explains Mr Espone, who is a recipient of the MDIS Merit Scholarship (Local), which covers part of his course fees.

Track record

Mr Espone chose to pursue his MBA via MDIS for two reasons. One is the standing of the conferring institution. The University of Sunderland is ranked 23rd out of 114 universities in the 2014 Guardian University Guide for business management studies.

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GLOBAL OPERATIONS MANAGER

Second, the curriculum covers a wide span of topics including project management, global corporate strategy, and managing and leading people.

“This allows me to have a holistic view and knowledge of the major functional areas of business management,” says Mr Espone, who adds that he values the lecturers’ open sharing of their professional experience with the class.

In addition to lectures and group discussions, the analysis of real-world case studies is one aspect of the programme that “absolutely helps us to apply what we learn”, he says.

Learning network

Mr Espone’s MBA cohort of 15 comprises professionals from property and construc-

tion to education and retail sectors. The meeting of minds from different backgrounds enriches the learning experience, he says.

Everyone brings a fresh perspective to the table during group discussions and when analysing case studies. “We learn from each other since we all come from different industries, and this helps in understanding the course materials,” says Mr Espone, who has classes about two days a week.

Naturally, this opportunity has also been valuable for networking, which can translate into business and career opportunities in the future, he says.

For now, Mr Espone is embracing his current role at work, putting into practice what he has learnt from the programme. “With consistent performance, I strongly believe I can be a great leader in my organisation and develop my career further,” he says.

He also offers a tip on making the most of the MBA journey.

“As they say, the journey is more important than the destination. Getting the master’s degree is the ultimate goal, but do make full use of the network available, contribute in class and share your experiences,” he says.